

Transportation for Vermonters

AARP VT • American Heart Association • American Lung Association in Vermont • CarShare Vermont • Chittenden Area Transportation Management Association • Local Motion • Renewable Energy Vermont • Vermont Chapter of the Sierra Club • Vermont Clean Cities Coalition • Vermont Energy Investment Corporation • Vermont Natural Resources Council • Vermont Public Interest Research Group

2019 Policy Agenda

In support of a sustainable and accessible transportation system for Vermont, Transportation for Vermonters has adopted the following Key Policies and Positions for 2019.

Promote clean vehicles

Volkswagen Settlement (Appendix D) – Because VW installed devices on its cars to cheat emissions tests, Vermont received a \$18.7M settlement from VW. The settlement requires that funds be used to mitigate excess NOx emissions.

Action: T4VT believes that these funds should be used to support primarily electrification projects through the lifetime of the settlement. Any consideration of fund expenditures must consider the co-benefits of electrification to human health and carbon pollution.

VW Consumer settlement – This separate, \$6.5 million VW settlement will return \$2.9 million directly to consumers and \$3.6 million will go to the General Fund.

Action: T4VT calls on legislators to dedicate the \$3.6 million to an electric vehicle (EV) incentive with an emphasis on facilitating EV adoption among Vermonters who are low- and moderate-income.

Expand, integrate, and invest in a variety of transit, active transportation, and shared mobility options for Vermonters

As a rural state, our transportation system is likely to be more successful if we think creatively about what Vermonters need, now and in the future. To support transportation innovation, we urge legislators to think ahead about creating a *comprehensive* transportation system: one that includes our state's many transit providers, and also integrates shared mobility solutions (including car and bikesharing), ride sharing, walking and biking, ride service companies like Lyft and Uber, and technology that matches people with rides. In addition, smart growth land use and housing are foundational for transportation choice.

Action: In particular, we encourage legislators to:

- Build on our successes with transit in a rural state with investments that give our transit providers and others the flexibility to innovate and coordinate. Innovation means improving overall connectivity and access, which may involve technology, different types of vehicles and modes for different scales, and ensuring state and federal funding are flexible.
- Increase funding for public transit investments.
- Continue to focus on, and increase investment in, compact areas, particularly for housing.
- Increase funding for bicycling and pedestrian infrastructure, including sidewalks, bike lanes, and adequate shoulder widths, as well as infrastructure for other transportation choices.

- Integrate carsharing and other forms of shared mobility into our state’s provision of transit, and, looking ahead, adapt funding and incentives to better support this integration and shared mobility in general.

Modernize Act 250 to better integrate biking, walking, and transit

T4VT supports the creation or maintenance of criteria and other policies within Act 250 that promote smart growth over sprawl. The site by site approach to reviewing development that is used by Act 250 makes it challenging for land use decisions to promote smart growth locations, which support a sustainable and accessible transportation system. Criterion 5 should be modernized to further support multimodal transportation and development within compact settlement areas.

Action: To help accomplish this, T4VT supports the following changes to Criterion 5:

- Allow a lower level of service (or greater congestion) within compact settlement areas (downtowns, villages).
- Explicitly reference transportation infrastructure other than roads (sidewalks, bike lanes, public transportation) in evaluating whether a project causes “unreasonable congestion or unsafe conditions,” and measure impacts on multimodal facilities.
- Criterion 5B should be evaluated as to whether it is helping promote connectivity and transportation demand management. In particular, it is important to understand how frequently applicants successfully make the argument that Criterion 5B is not appropriate for a particular project, and whether the test of “appropriateness” ultimately helps achieve the goals of 5B. As written, the criterion may not be achieving its goals.

Proactively adopt policies to ensure that autonomous vehicles in Vermont promote equity and accessibility, reduce GHG emissions, and do not worsen sprawl.

Though autonomous vehicles may seem (and may be) inevitable from a technology perspective, T4VT firmly believes that the policies we put into place to ensure their success—from environmental, safety, cost, and equity perspectives—are not inevitable; they are a choice. As a state we should make choices that reduce environmental and land use impacts, reduce vehicle miles traveled, reduce surface area required for parking, and increase affordable access to transportation for Vermonters in all parts of the state. AVs must be primarily electric vehicles, and a connected, autonomous network is the best model to maximize the positive impacts.

Transportation for Vermonters is a broad coalition committed to increasing the affordability, access, and sustainability of Vermont’s transportation system.

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